<u>CLAIMS</u>

1. A method of searching a collaborative document database, comprising the steps of:

    providing parent documents and child documents in said database;

    for each parent document, building an index document listing a portion of said child documents;

    providing a search term; and

    searching all said index documents for said search term.

2. A method according to Claim 1, wherein:

each child document is related to at least one of the parent documents; and

the building step includes the step of identifying in the index document for each parent document, at least some of the child documents related to the parent document.

3. A method according to Claim 2, wherein the searching step includes the step of, for each parent document, searching for the search term in the child documents identified in the index document for the parent document.

4. A method according to Claim 2, wherein the identifying step includes the step of identifying in the index document for each parent document, all of the child documents related to the parent document.

1 5. A method according to Claim 2, wherein the identifying step includes the
2 step of identifying in the index document for each parent document, only the
3 child documents that both are related to the parent document and meet
4 predefined criteria.

1 6. A system for searching a collaborative document database, comprising:
2
3   means for providing parent documents and child documents in said
4 database;
5
6   means for building, for each parent document, an index document
7 listing a portion of said child documents;
8
9   means for providing a search term; and
10
11   means for searching all said index documents for said search term.

1 7. A system according to Claim 6, wherein:
2
3 each child document is related to at least one of the parent documents; and
4
5 the building means includes the means for identifying in the index document
6 for each parent document, at least some of the child documents related to the
7 parent document.

1 8. A system according to Claim 7, wherein the searching means includes
2 means for searching, for each parent document, for the search term in the child
3 documents identified in the index document for the parent document.

1   9. A system according to Claim 7, wherein the identifying means includes the

2   means for identifying in the index document for each parent document, all of

3   the child documents related to the parent document.

1   10. A system according to Claim 7, wherein the identifying means includes

2   means for identifying in the index document for each parent document, only

3   the child documents that both are related to the parent document and meet

4   predefined criteria.

1   11. A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a

2   program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps

3   for searching a collaborative document database, said method steps

4   comprising:

5

6   providing parent documents and child documents in said database;

7

8   for each parent document, building an index document listing a portion

9   of said child documents;

10

11   providing a search term; and

12

13   searching all said index documents for said search term.

1   12. A program storage device according to Claim 11, wherein:

2

3   each child document is related to at least one of the parent documents; and

4

5   the building step includes the step of identifying in the index document for

6   each parent document, at least some of the child documents related to the

7   parent document.

1   13. A program storage device according to Claim 12, wherein the searching

2   step includes the step of, for each parent document, searching for the search

3   term in the child documents identified in the index document for the parent

4   document.

1   14. A program storage device according to Claim 12, wherein the identifying

2   step includes the step of identifying in the index document for each parent

3   document, all of the child documents related to the parent document.

1   15. A program storage device according to Claim 12, wherein the identifying

2   step includes the step of identifying in the index document for each parent

3   document, only the child documents that both are related to the parent

4   document and meet predefined criteria.